

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Initially it is noted that the allegedly unsupported language was added at the suggestion of the Examiner during an interview conducted on June 12, 2003 (see Interview Summary) and a request for continued examination was filed to secure entry of such language. Moreover, it is believed that such language is fairly supported by the application as filed. Nevertheless, the issue is now moot with respect to claims 1-8 as the allegedly unsupported language has been deleted from claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

Claims 1-8 also were rejected as being unpatentable over newly cited Lindgren (US 4,940,503), EP 0561086, Gibbons (US 3,928,706), WO 98/00289 and/or Veneziale, Jr. (US 3,663,341). The newly cited Lindgren '503 patent does disclose the step of applying hard particles to a so-called decor paper impregnated with a thermosetting resin, and then applying a conventional overlay paper over the particle-coated decor paper (column 2, lines 33-35). This is a conventional practice the present invention seeks to avoid. As indicated on page 3 at lines 11-16 of the present application, a laminate coating can be produced in one step, as opposed to the relatively expensive, uneconomical two step process involving the production of a separately applied overlay, as taught by the Lindgren '503 patent (see page 2, lines 8-12 of the present application).


The need to apply a separate conventional overlay sheet is avoided by the method of claim 1, wherein a covering layer of fibre material containing melamine resin is applied onto the particle coated sheet. The Lindgren '503 patent neither discloses nor suggests, whether taken alone or in permissible combination with the other references, the application of a covering layer of fibre material instead of a conventional overlay sheet in order to avoid the separate production of a conventional overlay sheet and - as a consequence - to reduce the costs. Even more remote is and hint of using a fibre fleece as set forth in claim 2.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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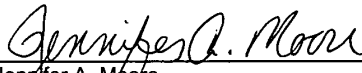
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Date: November 13, 2003


Jennifer A. Moore

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